



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Kyrgyz Constitutional Referendum

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission, Douglas Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 23, 2003

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I would like to begin by thanking the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan for his detailed explanation of the background and circumstances surrounding the upcoming referendum on the Constitution in his country. But I would also like to make a brief comment on an aspect of this referendum that is of concern to my government.

Mr. Chairman, The United States was encouraged by President Akayev's explanation in September of last year of the constitutional reform process he had launched to shift the balance of power from the executive to the legislative and judicial branches.

The active participation in the Constitutional Council comprising a wide spectrum of political representatives created a process by which a broad consensus on reforms was being formed.

The United States was concerned, therefore, by the unexpected publication on January 13 of this year of a new Constitutional draft, which did not appear to take into account the views of the Constitutional Council. In addition, this draft contains a number of provisions that would strengthen the executive branch as well as provisions that could weaken the role of civil society.

The United States is thus concerned that the current proposed referendum on February 2 will not permit adequate time to address these serious issues, provide for public discussion of the draft, or prepare for adequate monitoring of the referendum by the OSCE.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.